

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A spring steel comprising:

C: 0.5 to 0.8% by mass (hereinafter, referred to as %),

Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,

Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,

Cr: ~~1-4~~ 1.5 to 4.0%,

V: 0.5% or less including 0%,

P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%, and

Fe and inevitable impurities, wherein

the Si content and the Cr content satisfy the following formula (2) ~~(1)~~:

$$0.8 \times [\text{Si}] + [\text{Cr}] \geq 2.6 \dots (1) \quad (0.8 \times [\text{Si}]) + [\text{Cr}] \geq 3.0 \dots (2)$$

wherein, [Si] and [Cr] respectively represent the Si content (%) and the Cr content (%).

2. (Previously Presented) The spring steel according to claim 1, wherein the Mn content is 0.5% to 1.5%.

3. (Currently Amended) The spring steel according to claim 1, wherein the Cr content is ~~1.3% to 4.0%~~ 1.5 to 2.6%.

4. (Previously Presented) The spring steel according to claim 1, further comprising at least one selected from Ni: 0.5% or less excluding 0% and Mo: 0.4% or less excluding 0%.

5. (Previously Presented) The spring steel according to claim 1, wherein the V content is 0.05 to 0.5%.

6. (Previously Presented) The spring steel according to claim 5, wherein the Mn content is 0.5% to 1.5%.

7. (Currently Amended) The spring steel according to claim 5, wherein the Cr content is 1.3% to 4.0% ~~1.3% to 4.0%~~ 1.5 to 2.6%.

8. (Previously Presented) The spring steel according to claim 5, further comprising at least one selected from:

Ni: 0.5% or less excluding 0%, and

Mo: 0.4% or less excluding 0%.

9. (Currently Amended) The spring steel according to claim 1, consisting essentially of:

C: 0.5 to 0.8%,

Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,

Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,

Cr: ~~1.0~~ 1.5 to 4.0%,

V: 0.5% or less including 0%,

P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%, and

Fe and inevitable impurities.

10. (Currently Amended) The spring steel according to claim 5, consisting essentially of:

C: 0.5 to 0.8%,
Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,
Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,
Cr: ~~1.0~~ 1.5 to 4.0%,
V: 0.05 to 0.5%
P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,
S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,
Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%, and
Fe and inevitable impurities.

11. (Currently Amended) The spring steel according to claim 8, consisting essentially of:

C: 0.5 to 0.8%,
Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,
Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,
Cr: ~~1.0~~ 1.5 to 4.0%,
V: 0.05 to 0.5%
P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,
S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,
Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%,
Ni: 0.5% or less excluding 0%,
Mo: 0.4% or less excluding 0%, and
Fe and inevitable impurities.

12. (Currently Amended) The spring steel according to claim 1, consisting of:

C: 0.5 to 0.8%,
Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,
Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,
Cr: ~~1.0~~ 1.5 to 4.0%,
V: 0.5% or less excluding 0%,
P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,
S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,
Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%, and
Fe and inevitable impurities.

13. (Currently Amended) The spring steel according to claim 5, consisting of:

C: 0.5 to 0.8%,
Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,
Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,
Cr: ~~1.0~~ 1.5 to 4.0%,
V: 0.05 to 0.5%
P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,
S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,
Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%, and
Fe and inevitable impurities.

14. (Currently Amended) The spring steel according to claim 8, consisting of:

C: 0.5 to 0.8%,
Si: 1.2 to 2.5%,

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Mn: 0.2 to 1.5%,

Cr: ~~1-4~~ 1.5 to 4.0%,

V: 0.05 to 0.5%

P: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

S: 0.02% or less excluding 0%,

Al: 0.01% or less excluding 0%,

Ni: 0.5% or less excluding 0%,

Mo: 0.4% or less excluding 0%, and

Fe and inevitable impurities.